

Summers Long Ago

Byrnesville, Barnesboro, Northern Cambria, Cambria County, Pennsylvania

Home	About Byrnesville	Suggest Entry	Guestbook	Fair Use	Print PDF	Byrnes Family Tree	Quicksearch... <input type="text"/>
----------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

< [Fly Fishing on Walnut Run](#) | [Family Home in Barnesboro, PA](#) >

tuesday, march 17, 2009

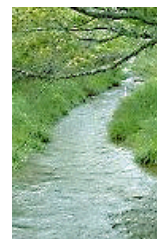


Summers Long Ago

Summers Long Ago
by Dave Potchak

My two daughters were just kids, under age eight, and we were visiting in my (and my wife's) hometown of Beaverdale, Pennsylvania. We took a walk and leaned over the handrail on a bridge to see kids playing barefoot in the creek below. There was a baseball game going on in the field next to the creek and the sounds of young kids playing filled the summer air.

I found my thoughts returning to those years growing up in a coal-mining town. And then my older daughter asked in a tone meant to wake me up, "WHERE are their parents?" The kids playing in the creek and on the baseball field unsupervised opened her eyes like a crab pinching a toe. But to me, the scene slipped by as normal. Wow! I thought. How the times have changed. My kids have never seen other kids playing in such places as a creek, a baseball park, or anywhere else for that matter, without some parents around. NO parents! What a sight for my daughters to behold! Even in their youth, they recognized the oddity in the fact. How could those parents leave those kids unattended?



So, the explanation of the "old days" began. Before there were child abductions - before there were faces on milk cartons - before every child had to be taught to be careful of strangers - there was a time of summer and playing. Not playing for a team, not playing to win, not playing in a strategy-filled game to please adults and parents, just simply playing. And that day seemed to be a fairytale in my daughters' eyes. But fiction it was not - it was all too true. As my attention that day returned to the baseball game, I now noticed that there were no adult voices filling that summer air.

No coaching! No inflation of egos! Yes, there was some name-calling and the criticism coming from their peers seemed more cruel than when it came from adults, but the kids were having fun. They didn't seem to care. And I doubt that any of them would be scarred for life. After all, I wasn't harmed growing up in that environment. I don't think I was. At least, no one TOLD ME I WAS.



They were laying out, diving on the dirt infield, sliding into home and bunting on their own WHEN THEY WANTED TO. They signaled when a base was to be stolen and laughed when a guy got picked off taking too large a lead. They were their own umpires. Their gloves were dusty and so were their jeans and I don't think one of them was wearing spikes. All were wearing ball caps, with the bill bent into an arch, but no two of them matched in team logo. And I bet none of them were "fitted" to each player's head size.

And when they were done playing, they picked up their own equipment and walked home. There was no team meeting and no

related websites

- [Cambria County Genealogy](#)
- [Life of a Sm Town Photographer](#)
- [Northern Cambria PA Website](#)
- [Po's Peek at the Past Magazine](#)

Byrnesville Web Visitors

since June 2008:



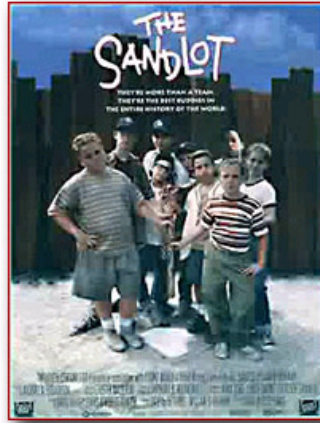
byrnesville contents

- [Byrnesville Boney Town](#)
- [Walnut Run Coalmine](#)
- [Coalmining Cousins at the Allport Mine](#)
- [Barnesboro in 1956](#)
- [Family Home in Barnesboro, PA](#)
- [Summers Long Ago](#)
- [Fly Fishing on Walnut Run](#)
- [Author Maureen Byrnes Hardegree](#)
- [Valley of the Pines](#)
- [Byrnes Family Tree](#)
- [The Byrnesville Snow Train](#)

cousin connection

[cousin connection](#)

notification of the next practice. There were no tools to groom the field and no parent's car used to take the bats and catcher's equipment home. There was no hose to water the grass because there was no grass to water. There were no Gatorades or sports drinks in sight and God forbid, some of the kids actually took a drink from the creek as they left the field. It was like a scene from the movie "THE SANDLOT."



As taboo as that situation must have looked to my daughters that day, it was so common to me, not that long ago. A game, a sight, and an era that had gone by forever. And it vanished in one generation of time, to boot. You see, before adults were forced to supervise everything a child experiences, there was simply a love of summer, a love of the game and a love of playing.

For the Mainline Papers of Cambria County and featured on Searchwarp.com



Reposted with permission from Dave Potchak. Check out Dave's great nostalgia site at Po's Peek at the Past. With photos and words, Dave lights the way along memory lane.

Posted by Edward Byrnes at 07:17 | No comments

Last modified on 2009-03-17 11:19

Karma for this article:

Current karma: 5 of 5, 2 vote(s) 352 hits

Trackbacks

Trackback specific URI for this entry

No Trackbacks

Comments

Display comments as (Linear | Threaded)

No comments

Add Comment

Name

Email

Homepage

In reply to

Comment



DANE CASTLE

Collections of Arms and Armor
Medieval Equestrian Combat
Royal Guests and Castle Tours
Great Hall and Grounds Rental
Strongstown, PA 15957
(814) 749-7341

<http://www.danecastle.com>



Maureen Hardegree
AUTHOR

Stories of the South
Old and New

<http://www.maureenhardegree.com>

creative commons



Edward A. Byrnes

my [Linked in](#) profile

Send your Byrnesville & Barnesboro area memories, facts, stories, & anecdotes directly to:

Ed Byrnes
412 Taylor Street
Rochester, MI
48307-1848

or email them to:
edwardbyrnes@comcast.net

Enclosing asterisks marks text as bold (*word*), underscore are made via _word_.

Standard emoticons like :-) and ;-) are converted to images.

We need to make sure you are a human. Please solve the challenge below, and click the I'm a Human button to get a confirmation code. To make this process easier in the future, we recommend you enable Javascript.



A reCAPTCHA challenge box with a red border. At the top, the words "further Oswald" are written in a black, hand-drawn font. Below this, a yellow box contains the text "Type the two words:" and an empty input field. To the right of the input field are icons for refresh, volume, and help. Further right is the reCAPTCHA logo with the text "reCAPTCHA™ stop spam. read books." Below the challenge box is a grey button labeled "I'm a Human".

- Remember Information?
- Subscribe to this entry